

Matthew A. Stickney Salem
From the Mint.

*Mint of the United States,
Philadelphia, July 1, 1867.*

CIRCULAR LETTER

IN RELATION TO

American Medals and Cabinet Coins.

Perhaps it is too apparent to need remark, that among the various kinds of rewards or monuments, none are in greater esteem than MEDALS. Convenient to handle, easy to preserve, demanding a high exercise of artistic and mechanical skill, often bearing a portrait, and always adorned with suitable devices and legends; they have attractions even for uncultivated taste, much more for learned refinement, and for the zeal of amateur collectors. Chiefly they are valuable as landmarks of history, and as a mode of honoring distinguished services and merits, whether in war or peace; whether in the line of art, or benevolence, or study, or enterprise.

The American nation has not been backward, in making use of this elegant method of conferring honors. And almost from its foundation, the *Mint* has been the principal place for striking medals, on account of the close relation of that business to its proper work, and of possessing the machinery, and the experienced artists and workmen, for the purpose.

Still, the Medal Department was never fully organized, so as to give facilities for obtaining copies of National Medals, until an authorization by the Treasury Department in 1855; since which date this has been a regular branch of business, and many medals have been struck and sold according to a printed tariff.

To aid in the execution of Medal and Coin dies, the Mint, nearly thirty years ago, imported the French Machine, the *Tour a Portrait* of Contamine, for making dies from models. The Mint has recently bargained for, and is daily expecting, Hill's Engraving Machine, purchased under authority of Hon. Hugh McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury; an English invention, for which it is claimed, that for its superior powers, and singular ingenuity, it will lay the other apparatus aside. We, therefore, expect to do justice to any orders, at a less expense, and in less time, than under the former system.

The occasion calls for a revision of our operations in this line, and for some reduction of prices, as will be found in the annexed schedule. And as cognate branches, it is proposed to unite therewith, the annual issue of proof or master coins of the regular series, as heretofore; and the specimen or "pattern" coins which are not adopted, or do not become so, within the year of their date. (The term "pattern" is used here, out of deference to the technicalities of collectors, and not because of its peculiar fitness; for if the piece fails to be adopted, it is not properly a pattern. "Experimental" is a better term) These last have hitherto been given out, or withheld, by no rule whatever; although they have by de-

grees attained to a very considerable importance, on account of the eagerness of many collectors to obtain them. There is, indeed, a pretty strong reason why these should be used only for their special purpose; namely, to aid the Treasury Department, or a Committee in Congress, in forming an idea of the size, appearance, and practicability of any newly proposed coin, or of any change of devices in an old one. But it has been found impossible to put this rigid limit upon them. If we strike only a few, the ambitious collector will have one at any price; and a competition is created, out of all proportion to the merits of the prize. It seems better, therefore, avoiding the error of making such pieces too plenty, to give some scope for the acquisition of them.

This whole department will be under the supervision of the Director of the Mint, and all inquiries and requests, with or without money, must be addressed to him. The medals and coins will be in the responsible custody of one of his clerks, who will also attend to the orders, reply to letters, and keep the accounts. The making of dies, and the striking of medals, proofs, and patterns, will be in the charge of the Engraver, and at his responsibility; other officers of the Mint rendering such aid of materials and machinery as may fall within their province. These arrangements, although internal, are, here openly stated, with a view to assure the public that there is a system of suitable checks and guards, against undue or secret issues.

While providing for what may be regarded as a public exigency, in the making or striking of medals, by extending facilities possessed by the Mint, it is not intended to compete

with private artists or artizans; but rather to aid their operations in this line, so far as it can be done without interfering with the specific duties of this institution. In fact, it is not intended to execute any medals here, that are merely for a private use, or for a speculation, or for a business-card; and whatever we are asked to do, must be directly from the original authority, and not for any middle party; except it be an artist, performing part of the work himself.

When a *gold* medal is awarded, it will perhaps be advantageous to have it done at the Mint, where only fine gold is used. We have found others (by the trial of specific gravity) to be of all grades of fineness, down to that of ordinary watch-cases; wearing, however, the aspect of pure gold.

The ensuing Rules are in plain terms, and hardly require a statement of reasons. It may be said, however, in regard to the Rule against striking a coin or pattern after its proper date, that while it seemed desirable that some patterns of former years, which are very scarce or curious, should be repeated, yet we could not issue them impartially, without giving out an indefinite number. And if some kinds are thus struck, there would be a call for other kinds; there would be no knowing where to begin or end.

Pieces struck out of date, bear a falsity on their face, and have not the interest or value of a synchronous issue. An uncertainty is also kept up, as to the extent of supply. And in the case of regular coinage, they so far falsify the Mint Records and Tables, as to the amount of coinage and delivery, or as to the very fact of such and such pieces having been coined in any given year.

On the whole, therefore, it seemed a plain course, to let the past go, and begin afresh. And it is a satisfaction to be able to assure all parties, that there has been no *resurgent* striking in the present Directorship.

The striking of specimens in other than their proper metal, never much practised, is to be discontinued. This irregularity has, of course, never been with unlawful intent, and never would have happened, but for the importunate desire to possess something odd, or to avoid the outlay of gold or silver. Such pieces have been struck, as patterns, from the dime of 1792 down to our day; but the united voice now is against using dies meant for gold or silver, upon copper or other base metal.

It is proper to say, that before these Rules were matured, advice was sought of several Numismatic Societies, and gentlemen skilled in this branch of study. There has not, of course, been an entire unanimity of opinion, as to details; but the general tendency was towards the result as herein indicated; and it is hoped that a general approbation will be accorded.

The extent to which the taste for cabinet coins, especially American, has reached, may be judged from the fact that we yearly dispense about eight hundred sets of proof pieces, of regular coinage.

It may be well here to give notice, once for all, that the proof sets of the new year, will be ready by the first of March.

RULES.

1.—No coins, nor pattern pieces, shall be struck after the year of their date; and to insure this, the dies shall be rendered unfit for that use.

2.—No coins, nor patterns, are to be issued in any but their proper metal.

3.—Any experimental or pattern piece can be obtained at the Mint, within the year of its date, but not after. Standing orders for such pieces will be registered, and attended to. Any patterns that remain on hand, at the end of the year, must be defaced; it is not desirable to make them as common as the proofs of regular coinage. If any sets of regular proofs remain over, they may be sold in the next year, but not later.

4.—The price of any pattern coin, in any but precious metal, will be three dollars in currency; if in gold or silver, the value of the metal is to be added. But when a pattern piece is adopted and used in the regular coinage, in the same year, it will then be issued as a proof, at a price near its current value; or if it comes out early in the year, it will be placed in the regular proof set. The Director reserves the right to send a pattern piece, without charge, to any incorporated Numismatic Society in the United States. In such cases, if the pattern is in gold or silver, the value of the metal will be expected.

5.—The price of the regular proof set of gold, will be forty-three dollars in gold; the proof set of silver and copper, three dollars in silver, as heretofore. To suit the convenience of many, payment may be made in the currency equivalent.

6.—The profits of this whole department are reserved to the Medal Fund, which is a part of the public moneys; and are not to be a perquisite to any person holding a place in the Mint. All such persons are expected to refrain from dealings in this line, or affording aid to friends or dealers outside. If this expectation is counteracted, it will call for serious notice. The rule, however, does not apply to such coins and medals as are not within the scope of this department. And it is, of course, intended that our Engravers shall be compensated for their work on medals that are to be paid for.

HENRY R. LINDERMAN,

DIRECTOR.

(LIST OF MEDALS APPENDED.)

LIST OF MEDALS IN COPPER BRONZED,

WHICH MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE MINT.

*The diameters, in sixteenths of an inch, and the
prices, in currency, are annexed.*

PRESIDENTIAL.

	SIZE.	PRICE.
THOMAS JEFFERSON,	47	\$2 50
JAMES MADISON,	40	1 50
JAMES MONROE,	40	1 50
JOHN Q. ADAMS,	40	1 50
ANDREW JACKSON,	40	1 50
MARTIN VAN BUREN,	40	1 50
JOHN TYLER,	40	1 50
JAMES K. POLK,	40	1 50
ZACHARY TAYLOR,	40	1 50
MILLARD FILLMORE,	40	1 50
FRANKLIN PIERCE,	40	1 50
JAMES BUCHANAN,	48	2 00
ABRAHAM LINCOLN,	48	2 00
ANDREW JOHNSON,	48	2 00

ARMY.

WASHINGTON, before Boston,	42	\$2 50
MAJ. GEN. GATES, for Saratoga,	34	1 50
GEN. MORGAN, for Cowpens,	35	1 50
JOHN EAGER HOWARD, for Cowpens,	28	1 50
COL. WILLIAM WASHINGTON, for Cowpens,	28	1 50
COL. GEORGE CROGHAN, for Sandusky,	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. HARRISON, for the Thames,	40	1 50
GOV. ISAAC SHELBY, " "	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. SCOTT, for Chippewa and Niagara,	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. GAINES, for Fort Erie,	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. PORTER, for Chippewa, Niagara & Erie	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. BROWN, for the same,	40	1 50
BRIG. GEN. MILLER, for the same,	40	1 50
BRIG. GEN. RIPLEY, for the same,	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. MACOMB, Battle of Plattsburg,	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. JACKSON, Battle of New Orleans,	40	1 50
MAJ. GEN. TAYLOR, Palo Alto,	40	1 50
" " " for Monterey,	40	1 50
" " " for Buena Vista,	56	3 00
MAJ. GEN. SCOTT, for Battles in Mexico,	56	3 00
" " " (State of Virginia,)	56	3 00
MAJ. GEN. GRANT,	64	12 00

NAVY.

JOHN PAUL JONES, for Serapis.	36	\$2 00
COM THOMAS TRUNTON, for the action with the Frigate L'Insurgente,	35	1 50
COM. HULL, for Capture of Guerriere,	40	1 50
COM. JACOB JONES, for Capture of the Frolic,	40	1 50
COM. DECATUR, for Capture of the Macedonian,	40	1 50
COM. BAINBRIDGE, for Capture of the Java,	40	1 50
COM. LAWRENCE, for Capture of the Peacock,	40	1 50
COM. BURROWS, for Capture of the Boxer,	40	1 50
LIEUT. McCALL, for Capture of the Boxer,	40	1 50
COM. PERRY, Capture of Brit. Fleet on Lake Erie,	40	1 50
COM. ELLIOTT, for the same,	40	1 50
COM. WARRINGTON, for Capture of the Epervier	40	1 50
COM. BLAKELY, for Capture of the Reindeer,	40	1 50
COM. MACDONOUGH, Capture of the British Fleet on Lake Champlain,	40	1 50
COM. HENLEY, for the same,	40	1 50
LIEUT. CASSIN, for the same,	40	1 50
COM. BIDDLE, for Capture of the Penguin,	40	1 50
COM. STUART, Capture of the Cyane and Levant,	40	1 50
COM. PERRY, (State of Pennsylvania) for the Cap- ture of the British Fleet on Lake Erie,	40	1 50
PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS, Action on Lake Erie,	40	1 50

MISCELLANEOUS.

RESCUE of Officers and Crew Brig Somers, . . .	36	\$1 50
CAPT. INGRAHAM, for Rescue of Martin Kotza,	64	3 00
SHIPWRECK MEDAL,	48	1 50
U. S. COAST SURVEY, for Gallantry & Humanity,	21	1 00
JAPANESE EMBASSY MEDAL,	48	2 00
COLONEL ARMSTRONG, for Destruction of the Indian Village of Kittaning,	27	1 00
INDIAN PEACE MEDAL,	27	1 00
CAPTAINS CREIGHTON, LOW and STOUF- FER, Wreck of Steamer San Francisco, . .	47	2 00